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FAR EAST

2. Chou En-lai seeks transfer of POW's from American to "neutral" control (page 3).

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

25X1

4. British considering alternatives for Suez base (page 5).

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FAR EAST

2. Chou En-lai seeks transfer of POW's from American to "neutral" control:

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Chinese Communist Premier Chou En-lai

[redacted]
[redacted] the "important
step" in solving the prisoner of war issue
is the release of the POW's from American
control. Chou is said to be convinced that all prisoners held under
"neutral" control would "gradually" be repatriated.

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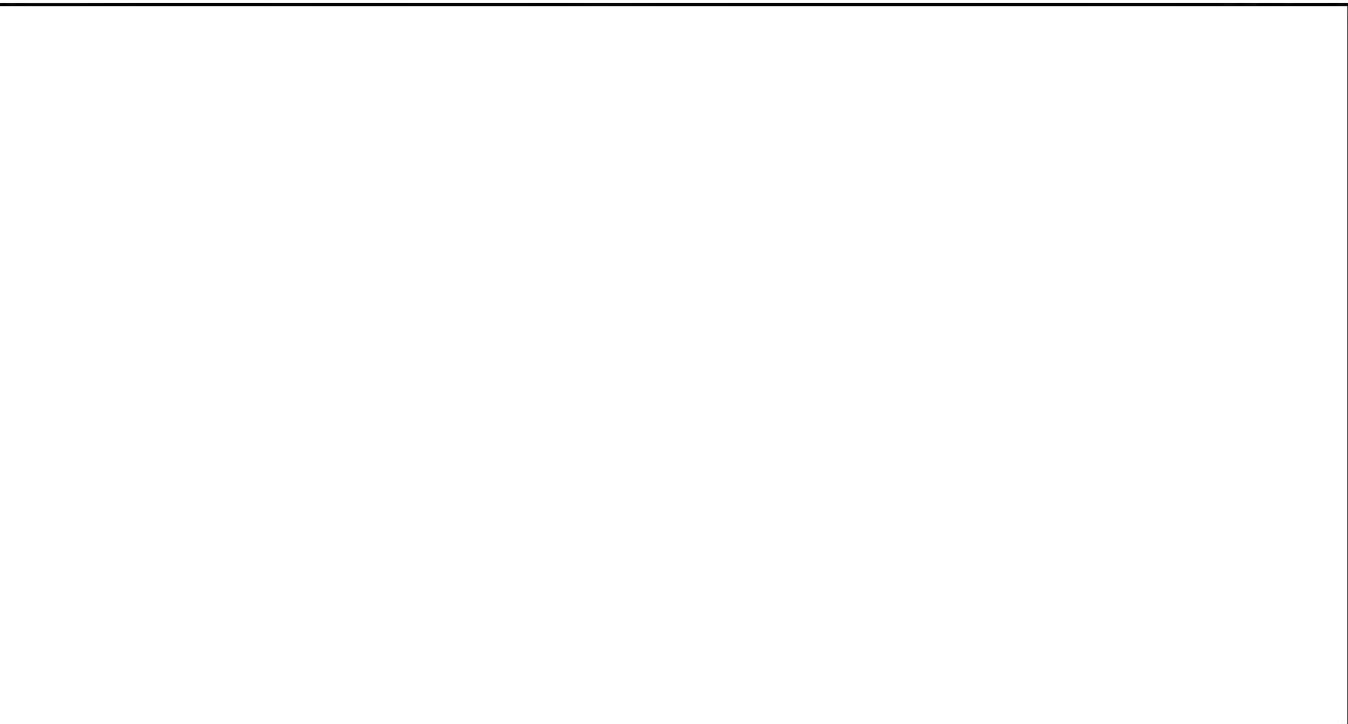
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Comment: Soviet and Satellite spokesmen in the UN General Assembly have recently taken the line that the outstanding issue regarding the POW's is the American screening and forcible detention of the prisoners rather than Communist insistence on total repatriation.

Nevertheless Soviet Foreign Minister Vyshinsky, in his most recent public statement on this issue, on 10 November proposed the creation of a commission which would "promote repatriation of all prisoners."

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4. British considering alternatives for Suez base:



Strategic base sites at Basra, at Haifa, and at Alexandretta in Turkey are being considered by British military planners as the possible alternative to Fayid, the present

Suez base. Fayid would probably be used only for workshops and ammunition dumps.

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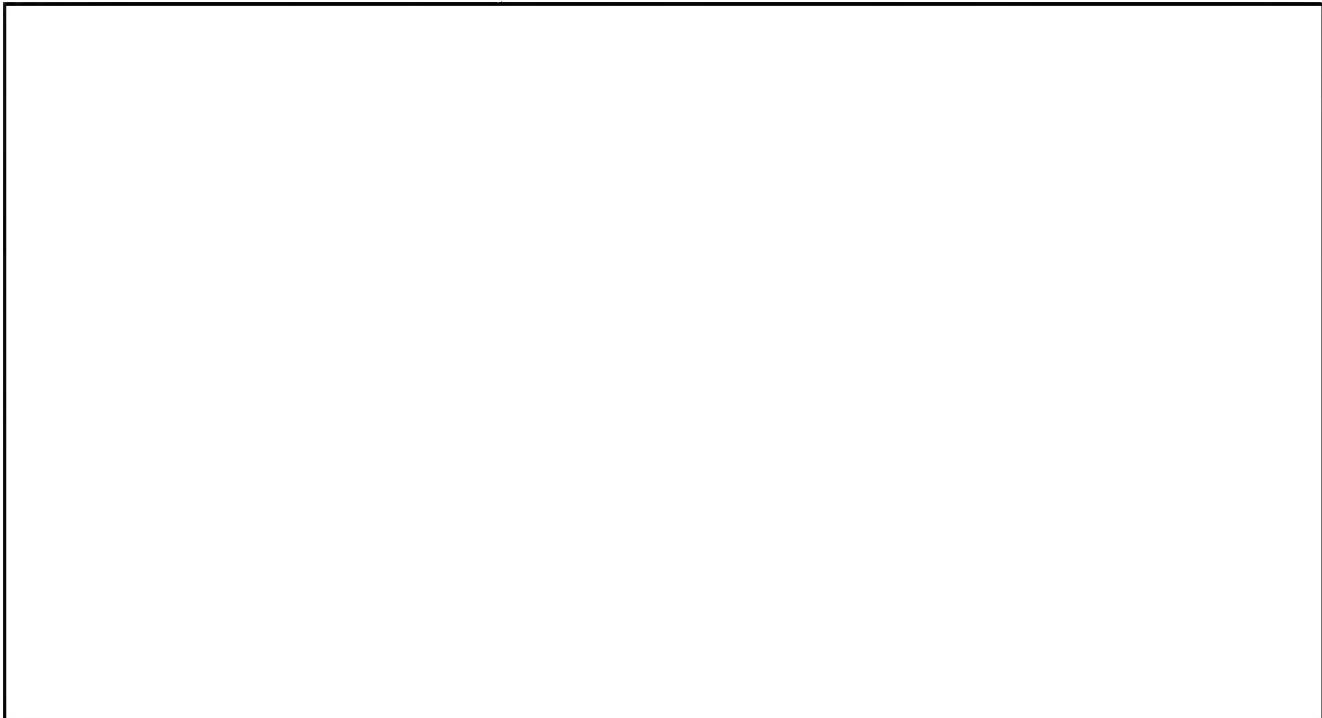
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American Ambassador Caffery agrees with the British contention that Fayid is perhaps not the ideal site from which to oppose Soviet military expansion in the Near East.

Comment: The three choices under consideration reflect a sharp shift in British military thinking. Britain has in the past insisted on maintaining the Suez Canal base because it was considered beyond the area which Soviet forces might overrun in the event of war.

Alexandretta has an excellent natural harbor, while the port of Haifa would need substantial expansion. Britain probably would encounter political difficulties in establishing a strategic base in Israel or Iraq.

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